

Submitter: Rod Such

On Behalf Of:

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Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB681

I am a taxpayer who objects to the use of my tax dollars to invest in fossil fuels via private equity managers. In fact I believe the whole private equity holdings in the Public Employee Retirement Fund should be discontinued due to its lack of transparency and vulnerability to corruption. Private equity is a recourse for the fossil fuel industry to hide from a public that is rightly incensed by the harm its products cause to the climate, such as increased intensity of storms, the spread of wildfires, desertification, rising sea levels, coral reef destruction and its attendant impact on fishing and food resources, increased climate refugee migration, spread of tropical diseases for which people lack immunity, and on and on.

However, I have yet another reason for objecting to private equity; namely, the way private equity managers court public pension fund managers, such as the staff of the Oregon Treasury which makes the state's private equity investment decisions. Why, for example, did the Oregon Treasury staff invest in spyware software as early as 2014 when it purchased a stake in Francisco Partners, a private equity firm with a controlling interest in the Israeli spyware firm NSO Group, makers of the notorious Pegasus software? Why did it increase that stake to the tune of \$233 million when the private equity firm Novalpina Capital acquired NSO from Francisco in 2019, despite media coverage of the use of the software in human rights violations as early as 2016? Who is watching the way Treasury staff invests in private equity? The Pause Act should be a step forward in this regard.